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PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
TRSE-00 SY-05 SYE-00 DCT-02 AID-07 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 /098 W

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O R 022030Z MAY 80
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5238
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

[REDACTED] SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 3695

USEEC

ROME FOR VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 12065: GDS 5/2/86 (FRIEDMAN, TOWNSEND B.) OR-P
TAGS: SHUM AR
SUBJ: (U) HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY - APRIL 19-MAY 2, 1980

REF: BUENOS AIRES 3255

1. [REDACTED] SUMMARY: AN ACCUSED TERRORIST WINDS UP IN JAIL,
RATHER THAN DISAPPEARED. THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR SHOWS
PUBLIC "UNDERSTANDING" OF GOA. HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS IN-
TEND TO PRINT AND DISTRIBUTE THE IAHRC REPORT. END SUMMARY.

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2. (U) TERRORIST JAILED: THE PRESS REPORTED THE ARREST

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OF GERARDO MANUEL REINOSO, WHO HAD BEEN ON THE GOA'S WANTED LIST SINCE 1976 FOR HIS ALLEGED MEMBERSHIP IN A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION. REINOSO, WHO REPORTEDLY HAD BEEN LIVING CLANDESTINELY IN ARGENTINA, ORIGINALLY JOINED THE "CHE GUEVARA REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT" IN 1976. HE IS BEING HELD AT THE DISPOSITION OF A FEDERAL JUDGE.

3. [REDACTED] AS A KNOWLEDGEABLE ARGENTINE ARMY COLONEL POINTED OUT TO US, IN THE VERY RECENT PAST AN INDIVIDUAL, SUCH AS REINOSO, ACCUSED OF PAST ACTIVE ASSOCIATION WITH TERRORISTS WOULD SIMPLY HAVE "DISAPPEARED." HE SAID THAT THE USE OF THE LAW IN THIS MATTER FOLLOWS CLEAR ORDERS FROM THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE GOA FOR DEALING WITH SUCH CASES. IF SO, IT WOULD MARK ANOTHER IMPORTANT STEP ON ARGENTINA'S RETURN TOWARDS THE RULE OF LAW. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT HARD-CORE, ACTIVE TERRORISTS WHO ARE CAPTURED BY THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUED TO BE TREATED AS IN THE PAST: INTERROGATION AND, AT SOME POINT, EXECUTION.

4. [REDACTED] MORE ON THE BENITEZ AND OTHER 1980 DISAPPEARANCES: THIS MAY BE THE CASE OF ANGEL SERVANDO BENITEZ, WHOSE DISAPPEARANCE REPORTEDLY TOOK PLACE MARCH 20 (REFTEL). A RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUE HAS TOLD US THAT ACCORDING TO BENITEZ'S FAMILY THE DISAPPEARED MAN SPENT ABOUT TEN MONTHS LIVING ABROAD, ALLEGEDLY IN SPAIN AFTER WHAT THE FAMILY DESCRIBED AS A "QUARREL" WITH HIS WIFE. THEN, EARLIER THIS YEAR HE TRAVELED FROM EUROPE TO RIO WHERE HE MET HIS WIFE AND SMALL CHILD. AFTER THIS REUNION, BENITEZ, SENT HIS FAMILY AHEAD OF HIM TO ARGENTINA, TRAVELING HIMSELF TO BUENOS AIRES SEPARATELY BY A ROUTE HE [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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NEVER REVEALED. ON THE BASIS OF THIS SOMEWHAT UNUSUAL TRAVEL HISTORY, OUR SOURCE CLEARLY SUSPECTS THAT BENITEZ MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH TERRORISTS. OF COURSE, WHATEVER HIS INVOLVEMENT BENITEZ IS ENTITLED TO THE PROTECTION OF THE LAW AND DUE PROCESS, A POINT WE HAVE BEEN MAKING IN GENERAL TERMS TO OUR GOA CONTACTS FOR MANY MONTHS.

5. (U) DISAPPEARANCE REPORTED UNFOUNDED: ON A HAPPIER NOTE, THE CLAIM MADE IN BRAZIL THAT A BRAZILIAN ACTIVIST AND HIS ARGENTINE GIRL FRIEND HAD DISAPPEARED IN

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ARGENTINA APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN INACCURATE. ACCORDING TO THE BRAZILIAN CONSULATE HERE, THE TWO WERE DETAINED BY BUENOS AIRES POLICE FOR SEVERAL HOURS BUT THEN RELEASED. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY PERMANENT ASSEMBLY CONTACTS THAT THEY HAVE HAD NO DIRECT INQUIRIES OR REQUESTS CONCERNING THE OTHER 1980 REPORTED DISAPPEARANCES, LUIS DE CORDOBA AND RICARDO SORIA.

6. (U) ITALIAN AMBASSADOR PATS GOA ON BACK: THE PRESS REPORTS THAT ITALY'S AMBASSADOR TO ARGENTINA, UBERTO BOZZINI, TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT ITALY'S OWN EXPERIENCE WITH TERRORISM ENABLES IT TO "ADOPT A MORE UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDE TOWARDS ARGENTINA." THE AMBASSADOR'S REMARK, WHICH WAS MADE TO PROVINCIAL PAPERS IN SALTA, PARALLELS A SIMILAR COMMENT THAT HE MADE TO THE PRESS IN LA PLATA SEVERAL WEEKS AGO.

7. [REDACTED] THE AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT REFLECTS WHAT APPEARS TO US AS A GENERAL TREND OF IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS AND THE GOA. ONE EC-9 DIPLOMAT TOLD US THAT THOUGH THE ARGENTINES HAVE A WAY TO GO, HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES ARE INCREASINGLY LESS IMPORTANT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND EUROPEAN CAPITALS. THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE IAHRC REPORT MAY SLOW THIS PROCESS OF IMPROVEMENT, BUT IN HIS VIEW THE DELAY WILL BE A TEMPORARY ONE SO LONG AS ARGENTINA AVOIDS THE
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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GROSS VIOLATIONS OF THE PAST.

3. [REDACTED] IAHRC REPORT: THE IAHRC COMMISSION REPORT CONTINUES TO BE UNAVAILABLE IN ARGENTINA. HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS TOLD US THAT THEY HAVE MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO HAVE THE REPORT PUBLISHED HERE BY A PRIVATE PRINTING HOUSE AND HOPE TO HAVE AS MANY AS 100,000 COPIES DISTRIBUTED. THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE GOA'S ATTITUDE
[REDACTED]

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AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS

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WILL BE WHEN IT BECOMES AWARE OF THEIR PLANS--LAST YEAR
THE GOVERNMENT SEIZED A PRINTING OF THE LIST WITH NAMES
OF THE DISAPPEARED ON IT. THE ACTIVISTS BELIEVE THAT
PUBLICATION OF THE FULL REPORT HERE WOULD AT LAST AWAKEN
THE CONCERN OF THE ARGENTINE PUBLIC TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY THE GOA.

9. [REDACTED] IF THE PUBLIC'S LACK OF INTEREST IN THE VIOLA-
TIONS CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO AN INFORMATION GAP, WHICH WE
DOUBT, THEY MAY BE RIGHT. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE
REFUSAL OF THE PUBLIC TO GET VERY CONCERNED WITH THE
PAST REFLECTS MORE PROFOUND CAUSES, INCLUDING AN INDIF-
ERENCE TO STATE ORIGINATED VIOLENCE, THEN THE PUBLICA-
TION HERE WILL NOT MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE. BUT IF THE

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[REDACTED]

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ACTIVISTS DO PUSH AHEAD WITH THEIR PLANS TO PUBLISH
AND DISSEMINATE THE REPORT, THEN THE GOA WILL HAVE TO
CHOOSE BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL REACTION AGAINST

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SUPPRESSING IT AND THE REACTION IN SOME MILITARY
QUARTERS IF IT ALLOWS THE IAHRC DOCUMENT TO CIRCULATE.

10. (U) ON ANOTHER FRONT, FOREIGN MINISTER PASTOR
INVITED THE AMBASSADORS OF OAS MEMBER STATES TO LUNCH
THIS WEEK. IN HIS POST LUNCHEON REMARKS, PASTOR MADE
INDIRECT BUT CLEAR AND CRITICAL REFERENCE TO THE IAHRC
WHEN HE ALLUDED TO "ELEMENTS" OF THE INTER-AMERICAN
SYSTEM WHICH "EXCEED THEIR MANDATES, INVADING TERRITORY
WHICH IS CLOSED TO THEM, CREATING SITUATIONS WHICH GIVE
RISE TO A LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN INTER-AMERICAN INSTITU-
TIONS." PASTOR WENT ON TO SAY THAT ORGANIZATIONS THAT
BEHAVE IN THIS MANNER COULD BE "SOWING THE SEEDS" FOR
THEIR EVENTUAL "SELF-DESTRUCTION." PASTOR'S TOUGH, IF
INDIRECT, LANGUAGE, IS CLEARLY PART OF THE GOA'S EFFORT
TO HAVE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ATTENUATE, AT LEAST, THE
IAHRC ARGENTINE REPORT.
CASTRO

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